

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 5330

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, JA, US, OEXC

SUBJECT: US-JAPAN METALWORKERS' CONFERENCE

REF: TOKYO 3613

1. IN APRIL 9 MEETING WITH EA LABOR ADVISOR, IMF-JC
SECGEN ICHIRO SETO REITERATED HIS ORGANIZATION'S HOPES
FOR US-JAPAN METALWORKERS' CONFERENCE SCHEDULED FOR
MAY 3-4 IN HONOLULU (REFTEL), BUT STRESSED CONCERN OVER
LAST MINUTE CANCELLATIONS BY TOP US UNION LEADERS AND
NOTED THAT US SIDE HAS NOT RPT NOT YET GIVEN FINAL
CONFIRMATION. WHILE REALIZING THAT FIRST CONFERENCE
WILL BE LARGELY CEREMONIAL, SETO BELIEVES IT WILL PROVIDE
GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR BOTH SIDES TO DISCUSS EXPANSION OF
DIRECT EXCHANGE PROGRAMS BETWEEN THEM AS WELL AS POSSIBLE
INITIATION OF JOINT ASSISTANCE TO IMF OFFICIALS AFFILIATES IN
SE ASIA. ON OTHER HAND, SETO FEARS CANCELLATION
OF CONFERENCE AT THIS POINT WOULD BE INTERPRETED BY
IMF-JC AFFILIATES AS LACK OF US METALWORKER UNION INTEREST IN CLOSER
TIES WITH JAPANESE COUNTERPARTS AND, SINCE HE HAD MADE MAJOR
PERSONAL EFFORT TO CONVINCE TOP JAPANESE LEADERS TO
ATTEND, WOULD CAUSE HIM GREAT LOSS OF FACE.

2. COMMENT. FOR JAPANESE SIDE, ONE PRINCIPAL IF UNSTATED
PURPOSE OF CONFERENCE IS TO ESTABLISH RAPIDLY A
CONSULTATIVE MECHANISM WITH US COUNTERPARTS PARALLELING
AFL-CIO/DOMEI SETUP SO THAT IMF-JC MEMBERS NOT AFFILIATED
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WITH DOMEI, SUCH AS STEEL AND ELECTRICAL MACHINERY WORKERS,

DO NOT GAIN IMPRESSION THAT US-JAPAN LABOR UNION
COOPERATION MUST BE CONDUCTED EXCLUSIVELY IN AFL-CIO/DOMEI
CHANNEL. IMF-JC LEADERS HAVE ALSO SUDDENLY BECOME
AWARE THAT THEIR GOOD FRIENDS ON US SIDE SUCH AS UAW'S
WOODCOCK AND USW'S ABEL AND BURKE ARE RETIRING SHORTLY
AND THEY THEREFORE NEED TO DEVELOP RAPIDLY CLOSE PERSONAL
TIES WITH NEXT GENERATION OF US UNION LEADERSHIP, WHOM THEY
HOPE WILL ATTEND CONFERENCE.
HODGSON

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